

Association of Mala Kurdan Culture and Education

Madame Chair, distinguished participants, as the representative of the Association of Mala Kurdan Culture and Education, based in Lausanne, I speak on behalf of a people whose dignity, identity, and fundamental rights have been challenged for more than a century. The Kurds, more than 60 million worldwide, nearly half of whom live in Turkey, are a nation divided across four countries. For decades, their language was restricted, their culture suppressed, and their identity treated as something to be erased. The Kurds are an ancient people, who, for millennia, have contributed to culture, knowledge, and civilization. Denying them their collective rights is not only an injustice to them, it is a loss for humanity. Despite being the largest non-Turkic ethnic group, Kurds were not recognized as a minority under the Treaty of Lausanne, and therefore, were denied of minority rights and international protection guaranteed under international law. Kurdish language, cultural rights, and political participation still remain structurally constrained. Beyond Turkey, the Kurds of northern Syria, Rojava, served as the primary land force of the international coalition against ISIS. Despite their decisive sacrifice in defeating ISIS, their legitimate demand for autonomous status within Syria is not adequately supported. Therefore, the international community must assume responsibility and ensure that Kurdish identity, language, and collective rights are recognized and protected across all countries where Kurds live. Thank you.